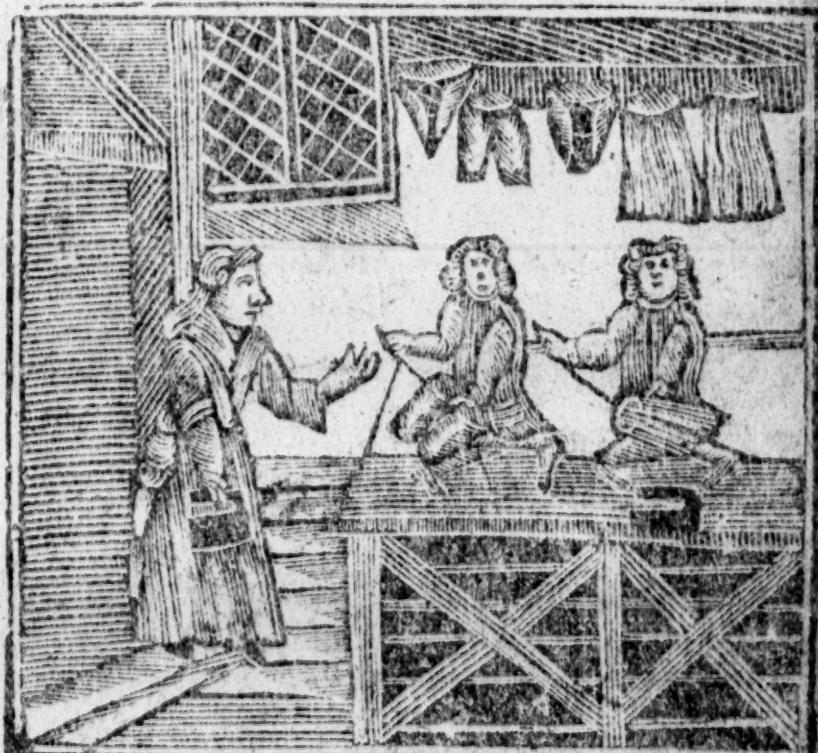


Wanton TOM,

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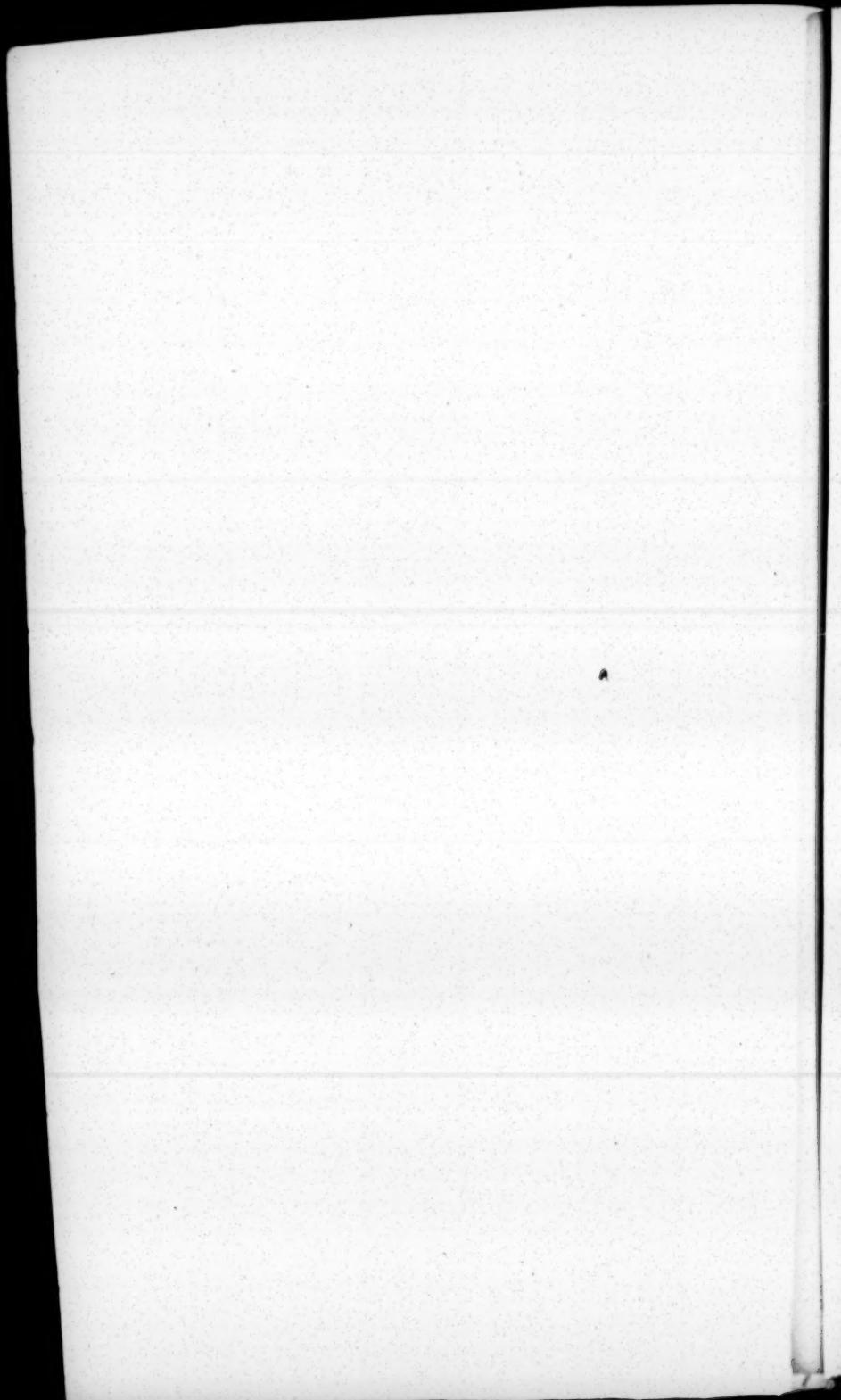
The Merry HISTORY
O F

Tom Stitch the Taylor.



Deck'd with such pleasing Pictures of Delight,
That it would invite a Lady, Lord or Knight;
To read it is a Gem, a Mint of Treasure,
'Tis Sport and Mirth beyond all Measure.

Newcastle: Printed in this present Year.

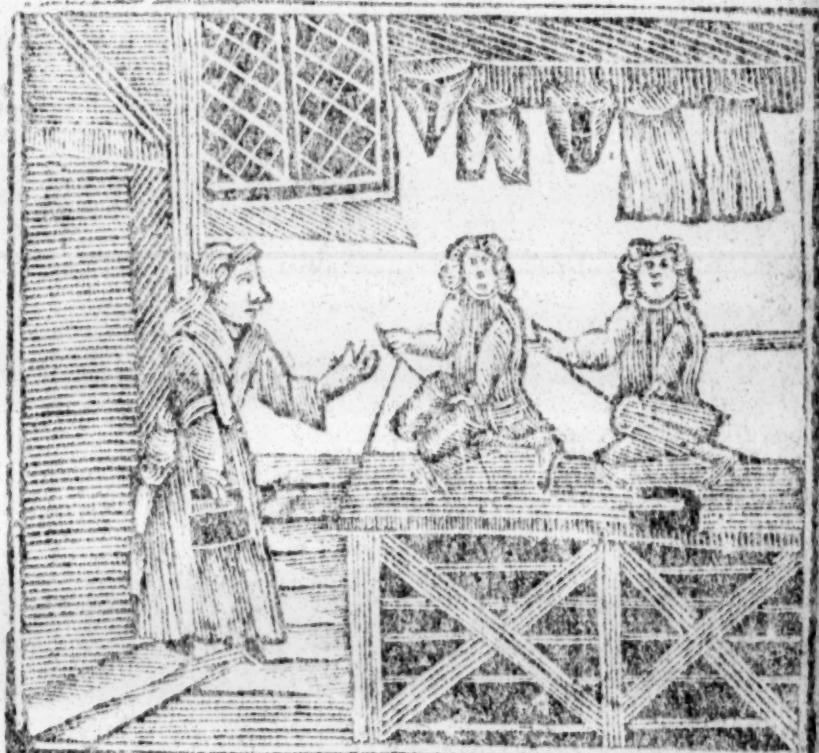


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THE
Merry HISTORY
O F
Tom Stitch the Taylor.

C H A P . I.

Of Tom Stitch's Parentage and Birth.

IN Thread-needle-street, at the upper End of Thimble Alley, lived one William Stitch, by Profession a Taylor, who was married to Nan Needle;

*Whom many Men did often thread,
When they could gain her to their Bed.*

She keeping Company with many Men, to gain Custom; at length she gained the French Disease; which increasing, she burnt her Husband's Thread. This being known among their Customers, they used to jeer her, and say, *She was a hot Needle indeed, to burn her Husband's Thread.* And when her Husband's asked them for Work, they answered

20, no, no; Do you think we will let you be our
Taylor, who sow with a hot Needle and a burning
Thread?

In a short Time after they were married, there
rose a great Contention between him and his
Wife concerning their Names; she would not
have hers buried in Forgetfulness, and such a one
as his flourish. Her Husband, to save Conten-
tion, yielding to let her Name be joined to his,
and so called *Stitch Needle*.

Soon after this she lived a more chaste Life than
heretofore, so that she proved with Child; but her
Husband, in half a Year after, died. He being
dead, and she very poor, could not tell where to
go for Relief, having scarcely any Friend living
that would regard her.

The Time soon slipped away, and the Day of
her Delivery drew nigh; but she not thinking it
so near as it was, neglected the getting such Ne-
cessaries as one in her Condition requires; so one
Day, unexpectedly, she fell into travail, no body
being with her but only a Maid, who first ran to
call the Neighbours, and then the Midwife; but
being delivered before she came, a poor Neighbour
had dressed the babe, which was a Boy. Then a
Minister was sent for to baptize him, who, ha-
ving Orders, named him *Thomas Stitch*; and a
while after the Woman asked the Mother what
she had got to give the Child? She answered, with
a Sigh, that she had nothing in the House but a
Porringier of Butter'd Cabbage, which she had eat
Part of that Day for her Dinner. The Child cry-
ing

ing very much, the Woman took the Cabbage and warmed it, and then fed the Babe with it, who ever since hath loved Cabbage beyond Measure.



C H A P. II

*Shewing in what Maner Tom was brought up
Of his being bound an Apprentice How, by a
mad Prank, he lay with his Mistress: How his
Master catched him in Bed with her: Likewise
how he had him before the Chamberlains for it, and
how by a Jest he was freed.*

IN a few Years Tom's Mother married again, and lived very happy, put him to School, and there maintained him until he was big enough to be an Apprentice: Then his Mother bade him make Choice of what Handicraft he would; to which he answered, That of all Trades he loved a that of a Taylor best. His Mother, with all Care imaginable, provided him a Master, whose Name was Mr Deceitful, who had a severe Wife to Servants, and Tom, being more addicted to Wagery than ordinary, she was the more severe to him; for every Morning, if he lay in Bed after Five of the Clock, she would go up, with a Cudgel in her Hand, and pull Tom out of Bed, and beat him like a Stock-fish. She using him so once or twice a Week, made him study how to prevent it: So one Morning the coming up to his Bed-side in a great Rage, fell upon him; but he leaped out of Bed,

crying, insomuch that the Tears run down his Cheeks. Then she returning very eagerly to strike him again; he took up the Forelappet of his Shirt, and wiped his Eyes, which when she beheld, she forbore to strike him, turning her Back upon him and so departed out of the Room blushing; and never after that would she call Tom up.

But he being not contented with what he had already done, soon contrived a Way to be revenged on her; for he imagined she kept Company with young Gallants, unknown to her Husband, and therefore resolved to find her out, if possible. Tom watching an Opportunity, one Day, in the Middle of the Week, saw her warming a clean Smoke which was not usual; he then began to apprehend she was to meet a Gallant abroad: So after she had dressed herself, and gone out, Tom following her, till at length she entered into a noted School of *Venus*, where none but the Sons of *Venus* were Practitioners, who had each a rich wrought Bed for a Study, and a Daughter of *Venus* for a Book; which is according to the Poet, who saith,

*A Woman is a Book, and often found,
To prove far better in the Sheets, than bound:
No Wonder then why Men take such Delight,
Above all things, to study in the Night.*

Tom seeing where she went in, returned back to Brocker's Shop, and hired a very rich Suit, Coat, Sword, and a Peruke: In this Attire he walked much like a Gentleman to that Door where his Mistress went in, and enquired, Whether that was not a School of *Venus*, where a Gentleman might have

have Entertainment? To whom the Servant replied, He might. Tom hearing this, entered in; and the first he met with was his then kind, tho' before cruel, Mistret, decked with all the tempting Dresses Art could produce: Her Face looked like Alabaster; a Tower upon her Head to conquer her Lovers; nay, her Smiles seem'd as if they would have overcome her greatest Enemies.



In this Dress she beholding his beautiful Looks which were scarcely to be equalled by any, thought him to be some high born Person, and herself very happy, though only to admire him. At length she

(8)

voke Silence, and gave him this courteous Salutation: *Much honourea Sir, your Looks do presage you are of some noble Extracion; your Majestick Presence forceth my Tongue to express what my heart thinks: Yet I hope, noble Sir, I shall not presume in so high a Nature, but that you shall forgive I shall think myself happy to be recorded among the Number of your Servants.*

He hearing her salute him at his Entrance with such inviting Expressions, imagined what she would be at; so taking her by the Hand, desired her to be his Pilot into some Heaven of Felicity. She readily yielded to his Request, and conducted him up Stairs into a Chamber. After he had entered the Chamber, he complimented her in this Sort; *Bright Madam, your matchless Beauty hath captivated my Senses; and if you will but vouchsafe to honour me with thy sweet and delightful Company, I shal think myself more happy than Paris, who enjoyed the Grecian Queen.* To which she replied, *Dear Sir, command me as your own while you remain here: nay, your sweet Looks have so charmed me, that I could die in your arms.* She yielding herself so wholly to him, he entertained her with all the choice Dainties the House could afford: But as he was taking his Repose with her he slipped a Pair of Scissars out of his Pocket, and cut off a Piece of her best Petticoat; and after he had enjoyed her, he made what haste he could, and discharged the Reckoning, and departed. At his Departure, she hoped to have his Company there again such a Day of the following Week; to which he consented, promising not to fail.

Tom

Tom made Haste and shifted his Clothes, and went home laughing, to think how he had served his Mistress, and how he w^{ould} have her at his Beck.

Tom's Mistress, after she had missed the Piece of her Petticoat, thought he had been some Gentleman her Husband had sent (fearing he had heard where she was) on Purpose to betray her, never thinking it was her Man Tom. She was greatly vexed for a long Time, and could not tell what she had best to do, sometimes thinking one Thing and sometimes another. In this Perplexity at last she pinn'd up her Petticoat, and resolved to venture home, let what would be the Event. So home she went, and found her Husband sitting by the Fire (poor Cuckold) warming himself, not thinking where his Wife had been, nor at whose Fire she had been warmed.

When she perceived he was ignorant where she had been, she thought he had made himself so on Purpose to hear what she would say. She sitting by the Fire very melancholy, at length her Husband asked her what made her so discontented? She answered, she was not very well. The Cuckold being very kind, as most are, caused a Cordial to be prepared for her; yet she could not be well for three or four Days.

Tom took no Notice of her at that Time; but, some short Space thereafter, he spoke to her in this Manner; *Good Mistress, I see you have been very melancholy these three or four Days; If you are any ways discontented, I will venture my Life to purchase your Content; or if any one hath done you Injury,*

jury, I'll spend every Drop of Blood in my Body to right you, if you will but let me know the Cause of your being thus sad and sorrowful. She hearing him speak thus unto her, which he never did before, checked him for his Sauciness, by bidding him be gone; which he instantly did; but said, as he was going out, Though I have offended you now, somebody will please you before Night; that being the Day he appointed to meet her.



She hearing him say so, mistrusted he knew, and having a guilty Conscience, asked what it was he said? Tom replied suddenly to her again, I hope you'll be pleased before Night; yet though you think
I know

I know nothing, you would be glad if I did not know what I do.

She being touch'd to the Quick, gave him Half a Crown to tell her what he meant: *This is the Thing that I mean,* said he, and pull'd the Piece of her Petticoat out of his Pocket: She blushing, gave him a Piece of Gold, begging of him not to tell her Husband, hoping he did not know already. *No,* said Tom, *he does not know, nor will I ever tell him.* When he had promised to her not to tell, she asked him how he came by it? He answered, *I am he that cut it off.* Then she, blushing more and more, said,

*Dear Tom, if thou this Secret will not impart,
A Purse of Gold I'll give thee with all my Heart;
Nay, I'll kiss and love thee without Measure,
And study Day and Night to yield thee Pleasure,
I have no Power to frown or angry be;
I'll not resist, do what thou list with me.*

Tom, hearing this, gave her a Kiss.

*But first he went to shut and lock the Door,
Then did to her as he had done before;
The Scene chang'd, no more in Awe he'll stand,
For now the Man the Mistress doth command.*

Now Tom lived more like her Husband than an Apprentice, having Store of choice Dainties given him daily to eat, Money enough, fine Clothes, his Bed, warmed every Night in the Winter time, and when his Master was out of Town, lay with his Mistress, but unknown to the Maid, or his Fellow 'Prentice.

Tom's

Tom's Mistress proving so kind, at length his Master took notice of it, and grew jealous; yet he thought it was only a Fancy of his, till at length it became so plain, that he could not but take notice of it, and therefore resolved, if possible, to find them out. Soone Day he feigned that a Lord, who lived in the Country, had sent for him to take Measure to make him a Suit, and that he was to liethere all Night; but he acquainted the Maid with his Design, giving a Piece of Gold, charging her at Twelve of the Clock at Night to open the Door when he gave but one Knock. He hizd a Horle, and had it brought to the Door, the better to blind his Wife, then mounted and rode away.

Tom and his Mistress being glad of the Opportunity, and thinking themselves safe, at Night she went to Bed, and he to her as soon as his Fellow Prentice was asleep, and there they enjoyed their wished Desires. But what should prove their Mis-hap! at Twelve of the Clock her Husband knocked at the Door, and he being let in by the Maid, went directly up Stairs to their Bed-side, drew the Curtain, and there beheld his Wife and his Man Tom encircled in one another's Arms, both being fast asleep. When he beheld them living so lovingly, he was scarce able to contain himself within the Bounds of Reason, but was ready to pull them out of Bed, yet pausing a While upon it, resolved to make an Example of them both, and first of Tom.

When

When he had called his Maid up to see and bear Witness of it, he left to Room, and them asleep, and between Two and three of the Clock in the Afternoon, the next Day, he came home, taking no notice of what he had seen in the Night. The next Day, in order to Tom's Punishment, he had him warned before the Chamberlain, which startled him and his Mistress when they heard it: She wondered that she did not know it; neither of them mistaking that it was for that. But she, that Morning he was to appear before the Chamberlain, asked her Husband, What Tom had done that he should be had before the Chamberlain? To which he replied, *You shall know before Night.*

When the Time came that Tom appeared before the Chamberlain, his Master made this Complaint of him: *Worshipful Sir. I have warned my Man before you to have him severely punished, for being so impudent and saucy as to lie with my Wife; and to prove the Truth of it, I have brought my Maid to witness it: Therefore I intreat your Worship to punish him with all the Severity the Law can inflict.*

The Chamberlain hearing what a Fool he was to proclaim himself a Cuckold, smiled in Conceit; then called Tom, and asked him, Whether that was true which his Master said against him? To which he answered, *If it please your Worhsip, I cannot deny it. You are, said the Chamberlain, an impudent Rogue. Not, said Tom, such an impudent Rogue as your Worhsip —— takes me to be. Come, Sirrah, said the Chamberlain, I'll teach you to set your Words closer together. He observing Tom to be very arch, reproved him, by telling him what a great*

a great Sin it was, and bidding him fly from the Embraces of his Mistress, as Joseph did. May it please your Worship, said Tom, if his Mistress had been so fair as mine, he would not have forsaken her. The Chamberlain hearing this Jest, fell into a great Laughter, as likewise did all those that were then present, and immediately dismissed him, without any Punishment.

His Master seeing him discharged so, and himself made the Object of all his Neighbours Sport and Laughter, made what haste he could home, and told his Wife in a great Rage, That if ever she let Tom lie with her again, he would turn them both out of Doors, and put them to seek for fresh Quarrels; but if she would promise never to lie with him again, all should be well, and he would forgive all whatever was past. She made a thousand Protestations to obey his Commands, and never more to offend in the like Nature; yet, notwithstanding of all her Promises, she made use of all Opportunities to steal into the sweet Embraces of her pretty Tom.





C H A P. III

Shewing how Tom was revenged on the Maid for not telling him of his Master's Design in taking him and his Mistress in the Bed together. Of his Mistress's Death; and of his being turned out of Doors.

WHEN this Quarrel was over, and all Things quiet, Tom studied how to be revenged on the Maid for not acquainting him and his Mistress of his Master's Plot, in catching him with his Mistress. Tom at length imagined she and his Fellow 'Prentice were married, sometimes missing him in the Night, yet never suspected any Thing but that he only rose out of his Bed; so now he resolved to watch him, and afterwards slept as Dogs sleep for three or four Nights together, and observed him constantly to go to her: But one Night when they were at Supper, Tom put sleeping Powder into his Fellow 'Prentice's Drink, to make him sleep sound; and about One of the Clock, the same Hour he used to rise, he jogged him, that he might know it he was asleep. Tom perceiving he was asleep, arose, and went to his Fellow 'Prentice's Wife, but resolved, if she spoke, only to whisper, she lying awake ready to receive him. When she heard him, she desired him to drink that Pint of Sack, thinking Tom to be her Husband: So when he had drink it, she received him into her Arms, embracing him very lovingly there remaining

maiding two Hours, enjoying his Heart's Delight then, with a parting Kiss, he bid her Adieu.

Tom coming to his own Bed, he found his Fellow 'Prentice fast asleep as he left him. In the Morning, about Six o'Clock, Tom arose, leaving him asleep, and went down, the supposed Maid being up, to thank her for the Sack he drank, and the kind Entertainment she gave him in her Bed. *O Heavens, said she, was it you! I beg you on my Knees never to reveal it; for if you do, I am undone; for I thought you to be your Fellow 'Prentice, to whom I am married.* No, said he, I'll be even with you now.

The more he threatened to tell, the more she persuaded him to keep it secret, offering him any Thing he would desire. *Since you are so willing to have it concealed, said he, I will take some Pity on you, though you would not of me. Bring me down half a Year's Wages.* She yielding to give him the Money, but not to lie with him, as he had further requested of her. When she found she could not prevail, she yielded also to lie with him; but shortly after she proved with Child, and left her Service, desiring him never to reveal it, which he promised never to do.

In a Month after she was gone, his Mistress fell sick and died, and he out of his Time within a Fortnight thereafter. His Mistress being still incensed against him, turned him out of Doors that very Day his Time expired; so that Tom could not tell whither to go, nor what to do. Now his best Friend, and loving Mistress, was dead, being

being ashamed to go near any of his Relation he having proved so very ungrateful to them in his Apprenticeship.



C H A H. IV.

Shewing how Tom forsook London; his Lamentation at his Departure; of his being entertained by an old Woman, who was very rich, in Leeds in Yorkshire: Likewise how he promised to marry her and fifteen Maids in one Day, whom he got with Child in sixteen Weeks: Lastly, how he appointed them all to meet him in a particular Place; and how he deceived them, and left the Town.



SOON after Tom's dear Mistress was dead, being almost in Despair, he resolved to take a Ramble into the Country, hoping to find some Employment there. In order to which, he provi-

what Necessaries he stood in need of, and then set forwards on his Journey. And when he was about a Mile from London, in a pleasant Field, upon a green Bank, on a bright Sun-shining Day, he sat down and made this sad Lamentation:

O Fortune! frown no more as thou hast done,
But let my Joys shine bright, as doth the Sun:
Let me no more upon the Rock of Fate be toss'd,
Nor think of her whom I have lately lost:
My loving Mistress, who I made a Slave,
Is fled from me, for to embrace the Grave,
Triumphing Grief! I fear my Heart will break;
My Tears gush forth, my Tongue can scarcely speak:
None ever yet did mourn and weep like me,
Nor none sure that had the like Destiny,
But bold, in vain I grieve for her that's gone,
I'll no more to the regardless Air made Moan:
If Fortune will but smile on me once again,
I'll quit myself from all this Grief and Pain,
Farewell rich London, and my Mother too,
For unto both I now must bid Adieu.

Tom having eased his Mind, rose up, and went on till he came to *Leeds*, where he was entertained very kindly by a rich old Woman, both for Bed and Board; for he no sooner asked her, but she consented, and was very glad when he sued to her for Affection, whom she daily wished to enjoy; yet kept off at a seeming Distance for some Time, though not long.

This old Woman doating on him, gave him any thing he desired; and Tom having her Purse as well as her Person at Command, asked her one Day, when he had been very familiar with her, to lend

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end him some Money to set up ; she not having the Power to deny him, let him have some.



He being set up, though in her House, made himself acquainted with all the Maids he could, who thought themselves never so happy as when they were in *Tom's* Company, and brought him all the Work they possibly could. *Tom* seeing them so loving and kind to him, tickled their Fancies with pretty Love Stories ; and one above the rest, named *Pretty Betty*, imagined *Tom* loved her, never having a sweetheart before, therefore every Day she would carry him a Leg of a Goose or a Turkey, or some other of her choice Dainties. *Tom* seeing how kind and loving she was, made her think he loved her, but resolved never to marry her.

There were many other Maids he pretended the like Kindness for, which his old Lady ^{and} ~~deceiv~~ing

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There were many other Maids he pretended the like Kindness for, which his old Landlady perceiving

g, grew jealous of him. So one Day after
he had been kissing one of the Maids before her,
she quarrelled with him, threatening to turn him to
the Door, and also to arrest him for what Money
he owed her. Tom soon quell'd her Passion with
some sweet loving Words, and was received into
Favour again; but resolved never to kiss any of
the Maids before her Face, but went home unto
their Houses, there being sixteen of them, whom
he got all with Child in sixteen Weeks, and pro-
mised to marry all.

Sometimes one would come urging him for to
marry, and sometimes another; but he pretended
several Things to be in his Way, so that he could
not marry yet. However, one Day, to blindfold
them, he bought himself a Gold Ring, and first
he told his Landlady, if she would lend him Five
Pounds, he would marry her with that Ring; to
which she agreed, for then she thought herself sure
of him.

When he had got the Five Pounds, he appoint-
ed her to meet him at such a Style, about half a
Mile from Leeds, at Eight of the Clock precise-
ly. In like manner he went on with all the six-
teen Maids whom he had got with Child, shew-
ing them the Ring that he should marry them with,
who rejoiced as much to see it as if they were al-
ready married, and gave to each of them a Yard
of Scarlet Ribbon to wear under their Ckin that
Day, desiring every one in particular to meet him
the next Morning at Eight o'Clock exactly, and
then to go and be married, to which they all
agreed: But yet he requested one Thing of every
one

one of them, and that was, to lend him all the Money they could; for he had, as he fargued, laid all his Money out to buy a bargain of Cloathes with. They believed him; so one lent him Five Pounds, some more, some less, according as they had; and when he had got what Money he could, he retuned to Bed.

The next Morning, rising very early, he desired his Landlady to dress herself to be married, which she did, and went directly to the Place appointed. After she was gone, Tom rode out of Town in



great Haste; but not to meet his Landlady and the rest of his Mistresses, as he had promised; but before he went, he writ these following Lines, and left them under his Landlady's Pillow.

Farewell

Farewell, old Hostess, my smooth flattering Tongue
Hath prov'd too old for you, tho' I'm but young;
You thought you had me sure, and that this Nigge
I shou'd with Licence yield you such Delight.
You that oftentimes claim'd Debts of me must stay,
For I'm resolv'd myself to double pay,
Could you so much a Fool think me to be,
To take one that's so old and cold as thee?
No, the Cage is far more just as it doth stand,
For you too oft had me at your Command.



Before his Landlady was arrived at the Place appointed, their overtook her first one supposed Maid, with a red Ribbon under her Chin, then another, and another, until eleven passed by. The old

old Woman seeing so many pass by with Ribbons under their Chins, wondered very much; till at length she came unto the Style, where she saw all those that had passed by her, and five more, all sighing and wondering at each other.

At length they espied a Man coming towards them, and made what Haste they could to meet him: But when they saw it was not him, none broke Silence, for fear of betraying themselves. The Man speaking to them, said, *I have a Message to deliver to you, but was charged not to declare it, till I approach the Style.* And as soon as he was come thither, they being gathered round about him, he pulled these following Lines out of his Pocket, they being sent by *Wanton Tom* to read to them.

*To you, poor Lasses, I these Lines doth send,
Confessing each of you have been my Friend:
Some brought me Work, some Dainties for to eat,
Not thinking ever I shoulde prove a Cheat.
'Tis true your Hearts and Minds they are now
pierc'd,
But who will laugh, you're ail alike distress'd,
Nay, my old Hostess thought this Day to marry,
Yet she, like you, for me must longer tarry;
And I your Money will as freely spend,
As ye your Maidenheads to me did lend.*

Now

Now for your Maidenheads you may complain,
Your Hearts and Money to return again,
Sigh and lament, but 'twill be all in vain.
Then Farewell you, from Leeds I now am gone,
And not contracted unto any one.

When I again do hear where he doth dwell,
A Second Part of his mad Pranks I'll tell.

The End of the First Part.

TO JU



